

Volume 9: Issue 12  
April 25 - May 8, 2012

\$1 suggested  
donation

# street sense

Read more and get involved at [www.streetsense.org](http://www.streetsense.org) | The DC Metro Area Street Newspaper | Please buy from badged vendors



## Homeless Stars Shine at Kennedy Center pg 5

*The women of  
N Street bring their  
inspirational  
stories to the stage*

## Homeless Count Results pg 4

## Nina the Detective Returns pg 12





**7** Two federal agencies suggest alternatives to criminalizing homelessness.

**8** It's not everyday you see a whale in the sky: "A Special Random Tuesday" by the Cowboy

**16** Positive thinking and "a nice middle-aged lady": meet Pieus Ennels.

#### COVER ART

*Life Stories* project brings the journey of homeless women to the Kennedy Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE THEATRE LAB SCHOOL OF THE DRAMATIC ARTS

#### @STREETSENSE.ORG

A new issue comes out every two weeks, but you can stay connected to *Street Sense* every day!



/streetsense



@streetsensedc



/streetsensedc

#### OUR STORY

*Street Sense* began in August 2003 after Laura Thompson Osuri and Ted Henson approached the National Coalition for the Homeless on separate occasions with the idea to start a street paper in Washington, D.C.

Through the work of dedicated volunteers, *Street Sense* published its first issue in November 2003. In 2005, *Street Sense* achieved 501 (c) 3 status as a nonprofit organization, formed a board of directors and hired a full-time executive director.

Today, *Street Sense* is published every two weeks through the efforts of four salaried employees, more than 100 active vendors, and dozens of volunteers. Nearly 30,000 copies are in circulation each month.

# Your Dollar Makes a Difference

(*Street Sense* economics)

Each vendor functions as a self-employed subcontractor for *Street Sense*. That means he or she re-invests in the organization with every purchase. Vendors purchase the paper for 35 cents/issue, which will then be sold to you for a suggested donation of \$1.



**35%**  
Supports  
production  
costs

Therefore, 35 cents of your donation repays the vendor for her initial purchase. The remaining money is profit that will support your vendor as he works to overcome homelessness.

**65%**  
Directly  
aids the  
vendor



As self-employed contractors, our vendors follow a code of conduct:

1. *Street Sense* will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations for *Street Sense* by any other means.
2. I will only purchase the paper from *Street Sense* staff and will not sell papers to other vendors (outside of the office volunteers).
3. I agree to treat all others – customers, staff, other vendors – respectfully, and I will not "hard sell." (threaten or pressure customers)
4. I agree to stay off private property when selling *Street Sense*.
5. I understand that I am not a legal employee of *Street Sense* but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
6. I agree not to sell any additional goods or products when selling the paper.
7. I will not sell *Street Sense* under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
8. I agree to stay a block away from another vendor and respect the space of all vendors.
9. I understand that my badge is the property of *Street Sense* and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers and display my badge and wear my vest when selling papers.
10. I understand that *Street Sense* strives to produce a paper that covers homelessness and poverty issues while providing a source of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

# Street sense

ADDRESS 1317 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005  
PHONE 202.347.2006 FAX 202.347.2166  
E-MAIL info@streetsense.org WEB StreetSense.org

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Yebegashet Alemanyehn, Margaret Chapman, Kristal Dekleer, Lisa Estrada, Robin Heller, Sommer Mathis, Manas Mohapatra, Brad Scriber, Michael Stoops

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Brian Carome

#### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mary Otto

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Eric Falquero

#### VENDOR/VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Allen Hoorn

#### INTERNS

Avra Bossov, Brandon Cooper, Jessilyn Justice, Evi Mariani, Christina Mele, Kendra Nixon, Meagan Ramsay, Anna Salinas, Ilana Shulevitz, Hannah Traverse, Ashley Trick, Abbey Woodfin

#### VOLUNTEERS/WRITERS

Rhonda Brown, Kara Brandeisky, Jane Cave, Margaret Chapman, Tracie Ching, James Clarke, Nikki Conyers, Bobby Corrigan, Irene Costigan, Sara Dommitt, Joe Duffy, Lilly Dymond, Ashley Edwards, Garrett Epps, Rachel Estabrook, Sarah Ficenec, Grace Flaherty, Andrew Gena, Steve Gilberg, Jane Goforth, Jonah Goodman, Roberta Haber, Cherilyn Hansen, Jesse Helfrich, Elia Herman, Melissa Hough, Sarah Anne Hughes, Laura Lindskov Jensen, Adam Kampe, Maurice King, Trisha Knisely, Vicki Ann Lancaster, Elle Leech-Black, Lisa Leona, Sean Lishansky, Elsie Oldaker, Ashley Perkins, David Piper, Katinka Podmaniczky, Mike Plunkett, Willie Schatz, David Sellers, Kate Sheppard, Ernie Smith, Jesse Smith, Lilly Smith, Kelly Stellrecht, Mandy Toomey, Brett Topping, Charlotte Tucker, Marian Wiseman

#### VENDORS

Gladys Akins, Orin Andrus, Charles Armstrong, Jake Ashford, Lawrence Autry, Daniel Ball, Alan Bates, Grady Baxter, Roberta Bear, Kenneth Belkovsky, Tommy Bennett, Frosty Bibbee, Phillip Black, Reginald Black, Deana Black, Viktor Blokhine, Harmon Bracey, Debora Brantley, Andre Brinson, Kanon Brown, Reco Brown, Percy Carter, Sunny Chadwick, Conrad Cheek, Lea Ciochetti, Elena Cirpac, Sarah Colin, Theresa Corbino, Anthony Crawford, Kwayera Dakari, Louise Davenport, Michael Davidson, James Davis, Charles Davis, Clinton Davis, Devon Dawkins, Chino Dean, David Denney, Nema Dixon, Alvin Dixon-El, Charles Eatmon, Richard Embden, Pieus Ennels, Kristin Evald, Betty Everett, Joshua Faison, Patty Feris, Larry Garner, Anthony Gist-El, Marcus Green, Barron Hall, Dwight Harris, Dewayne Harrison, Lorrie Hayes, Patricia Henry, Shakaye Henry, Derian Hickman, Venne Hill, Ibn Hippo, Jaamill Hippo, Anne Marie Holloway, Phillip Howard, James Hughes, Donald Johnson, Mark Jones, Ryan Jones, Evanston Kama, Tammy Karuza, Mike Leach, Ziang Lin, Anthony Lindsey, John Littlejohn, Michael Lyons, Kina Mathis, Authertimer Matthews, Charlie Mayfield, Marvin McFadden, Jermale McKnight, Jennifer McLaughlin, Jeffrey McNeil, Kenneth Middleton, Gary Minter, L. Morrow, Jai Morton, Tyrone Murray, Darryl Neal, Charles Nelson, James Nelson, Sammy Ngatir, Evelyn Nnam, Amen O'Jango, Moyo Onibuje, Douglas Pangburn, Earl Parkin, Franklin Payne, Aida Peery, Michael Pennycook, Frank Pruden, Ash-Shaheed Rabbil, Clifford Ringwald, Lawrence Rogers, Melania Scott, Chris Shaw, Veda Simpson, J. Simpson, Matt Southworth, Franklin Sterling, Warren Stevens, James Stewart, Beverly Sutton, Sybil Taylor, Paul Taylor, Archie Thomas, Shernell Thomas, Victor Thompkins, Deborah Tibbs, Jacqueline Turner, Deborah Turner, Bada Umoja, Martin Walker, Joseph Walker, Jeanette Walker, Robert Warren, Terry Warren, Wendell Williams, Edna Williams, Susan Wilshusen, Ivory Wilson, Mark Wolf, Charles Woods, Bertina Woodson, Tina Wright, Anthony Wright

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Run to End Homelessness

If you like to run and care about the homeless, Run for Shelter is the race for you. Carpenter's Shelter, the largest homeless shelter in Northern Virginia, is holding its very first race on April 28 in association with Pacers Events. The race in Alexandria, which goes out-and-back on Eisenhower Avenue, will include both a 10k and 1k path, and afterwards runners will be treated to cakepops from Sweet 'N Delicious, as well as an array of other goodies.

While the race will serve as a fund-raiser for the shelter, Kelly Andreae, Director of Development and Strategic Alliances at Carpenter's Shelter, says the race will hopefully also increase awareness of homelessness in Virginia.

"It's an opportunity to get our cause out to a new audience," said Andreae.

In addition to operating a day shelter, a long-term emergency shelter, and transitional housing apartments, Carpenter's Shelter provides life skills. The organization fulfills the needs of more than 1,000 children, families and adults in northern Virginia each year.

Last year D.C. had its last Walkathon, which means the new race is the closest Washingtonians get to a sporting event dedicated to end homelessness in their

community. The organizers hope to have 750 runners for the first race. 500 people have already signed up, but there will be room for many more, so all you runners bind your shoelaces and run a 10k for a good cause.

-Laura Lindskov Jensen

### Last Look at Winter

With the end of an unusually mild winter, the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) has met regularly to discuss the setbacks of this winter's hypothermia season in order to make adjustments for the coming year.

Since emergency shelters cannot open unless weather conditions are officially considered hypothermic, it leaves many of the homeless out in the cold with no way of knowing when the emergency shelters are open.

Hilary Espinosa, member of the ICH and senior case manager at Miriam's Kitchen, expressed her frustration with the alert system during an ICH board meeting.

"It is as effective as it can be, but there is room for improvement," she said. "The improvement is the need for more consistency."

The District's Winter Plan is supposed to provide that consistency. It sets

guidelines for how things should operate during difficult circumstances, such as freezing temperatures. However, some things, like moving the hypothermia season temperature higher, cannot be changed by the ICH because it is a matter of legislation.

The alerts to warn of hypothermic temperatures are sent out via e-mail by the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA). That information can then be found on the ICH's website or the weather hotline. However, many of the homeless do not have access to these alerts and are therefore ill-informed of the weather advisory.

The ICH is in the process of making adjustments for next year's Winter Plan, and the changes include things such as more accessible transportation and alerts.

-Abbey Woodfin

### Neon Messages Make Homelessness Visible

A game of chance visualized by a flashing snake and ladder, a speech bubble with the glowing message "Lack Of Love Made Me Homeless" and a simple "I Slept Here" illuminate the walls, each one part of a recent art project

exposing the plight of young homeless people in the English city of Wakefield.

Homelessness across England has increased by 14 per cent in the past year, and Wakefield is no different from the national picture. In response, the charity Pennine Camphill invited artist Richard Wheater from Neon Workshops to head a ten-week project, entitled *Visible Words From Invisible People*, in which homeless participants could showcase a particular message or idea through a neon visualization.

Wheater, born in Wakefield, works primarily with neon signage and runs the only workshop of its kind in the country using the medium. Through word of mouth, the prospect of involvement on a group art project led to a dozen homeless people coming in the first week. Wheater, founder of Neon Workshops, says: "I think the title really appealed to them; they do feel invisible. I think playing with fire also appealed to them."

Most of the participants, all classed as homeless, are aged from 18 to 24, apart from Dave: once married, with a well-paid job and two cars in the garage, he is now homeless. "It was a long fall," Wheater says. "You realize it could happen to anyone."

-Street News Service

# YES!

### I want to donate:

- \$60 Provides food for six Writer's Group meetings.
- \$100 Provides office supplies for one month.
- \$300 Buys vendor badges for six months.
- \$500 Makes significant improvements to the paper.
- \$1,000 Secures space needed for vendor training.
- \$1,500 Prints four issues of the paper.
- \$5,000 Helps build significant organizational capacity.
- \$ Towards whatever is needed the most.
- \$ Directly to vendor \_\_\_\_\_.
- \$40 For a bimonthly subscription (26 issues).

Please make checks payable to

"Street Sense"

and mail to

1317 G Street NW

Washington, DC 20005

Donate online @ [www.streetsense.org](http://www.streetsense.org)

# street sense

Help Street Sense vendors like Veda get back to work and improve their lives.

### My info:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



Email \_\_\_\_\_



Veda was homeless and dealing with a history of drug abuse. Then, more than four years ago, a friend referred her to *Street Sense*. Since becoming a vendor, Veda has found a new home and a new lease on life. She says her customers have been very supportive. "They talk to me and give me a lot of encouraging words." Veda can often be found singing and selling her papers on the corner of G and 13th streets,

# Homelessness up 6 percent in 2012

By Mary Otto  
Editor

On one single day last January, outreach workers and volunteers with clipboards and questionnaires found 6,954 homeless people, including 1,880 children, living in District shelters and streets.

Homelessness is up by 6 percent this year in the city, according to the newly-released preliminary results of an annual homeless count conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

The figures showed a very slight decrease in homelessness for the metropolitan region as a whole. A total of 11,830 homeless people were included in this year's survey of Washington and its suburbs in Maryland and Virginia — down 0.4 percent since 2011.

Yet while the count found fewer homeless single men and women (6,204, down 443 from last year), it included more homeless families nationwide.

The annual count has charted a steady increase in homelessness among families throughout the region since the recession year of 2008.

Over the past four years "we've seen an increase of about 23 percent among people in families," said Michael Ferrell, chairman of COG's Homeless

Services Planning and Coordinating Committee. "It's also a national trend."

A total of 5,611 homeless men, women and children living in families throughout the region were included in this year's count, up 405 individuals since last year. In addition, 15 unaccompanied youth were also counted.

The District claimed the majority of homeless people living in families. The city reported 3,187 homeless people living in 1,014 family units in 2012, up from 2,688 men, women and children in 858 families last year. As in many places across the country, the rise in homeless families has overwhelmed the District's homeless shelter system in recent years (see accompanying story).

Homeless children, numbering 3,388, accounted for 29 percent of the region's homeless population.

As in past years, many of their parents were working, according to the preliminary findings for 2012. Regionally, 35 percent of homeless adults in families are employed. Among homeless singles, 19 percent have jobs. The number of working homeless adults has declined since last year—an indication that the effects of the economic downturn continue to be felt, Ferrell said.

Yet overall, the fact that in some wealthy suburbs up to 60 percent of homeless parents are working, shows

the income of such low-wage workers "is not large enough to afford housing," Ferrell added. "They fall into the category of the working poor."

COG has overseen the homeless count for the past 12 years, and data for this year's report was collected on Jan. 25. As in previous years, teams of enumerators canvassed city shelters, rural campsites, abandoned buildings, parks, street corners and soup kitchens, systematically interviewing the homeless to garner the biographical information that would be compiled into the annual "snapshot" of the region's homeless population. The annual report helps the district and suburban jurisdictions plan ways to address the emergency and longer-term needs of the homeless.

"This is a critically important tool," said J. Walter Tejada, an Arlington County board member who serves on COG's Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee.

Without permanent supportive housing efforts aimed at getting chronically homeless individuals off the streets, out of the shelter system and into stable housing, the numbers would have been worse, Ferrell said.

Regionally, the number of formerly homeless people residing in permanent supportive housing has nearly doubled since 2008. The 2012 count found, 8,657

people living in such programs, up from 4,395 four years ago.

Permanent supportive housing "is the main reason that the number of people counted as homeless did not increase," said Ferrell.

Such programs, which offer assistance with the mental, physical and educational disabilities that contribute to homelessness, actually cost less than paying for the shelter beds and crisis and correctional services that the indigent would typically otherwise use, studies have found.

Yet faced with development and economic pressures, jurisdictions are finding it difficult to sustain and expand long-term programs that help chronically homeless people rebuild their lives, said George Leventhal, a Montgomery County Council member who chairs COG's Human Services and Public Safety Committee.

"You can get them off the streets, but getting them to be self-sufficient goes on for years," he said. "The challenge now is that we are almost maxed out."

A full report on this year's homeless enumeration, with more detailed information about homeless subpopulations and individual jurisdictions, is expected in May.

## Budget Battle Over Possible Cuts

By Mary Otto and Hannah Traverse  
*Street Sense*

Even while homelessness is rising in the District, a budget battle is unfolding over possible cuts to programs designed to shelter the indigent and feed homeless families.

Faced with a \$7 million loss in federal funds for the coming fiscal year, city officials in a recent human services budget hearing exchanged tense words over proposals to cut back on lunches at the city shelter for homeless families, close emergency shelters for homeless men and women, and eliminate outreach services to them during the spring and summer months.

Such austerity measures would help close the funding gap, according

to city human services director David A. Berns, speaking at an April 19 budget oversight hearing. But also acknowledging such cuts would be "draconian" and "horrible," Berns worked to reassure members of the city council human services committee that the restoration of the \$7 million in funding for homeless programs was at the top of Mayor Vincent Gray's budgetary wish list for fiscal year 2013.

"The mayor has seen this as his number one priority if additional funds become available," said Berns.

Human services committee chair Jim Graham was not mollified. He said he would not consider closing emergency shelters during warmer months of the year to save money.

"What are we going to do about

the \$7 million?" Graham asked Berns.

"I don't want 1,500 homeless people wandering the streets of this city with no place to lay their heads."

In all, the mayor's proposed \$9.4 billion budget for fiscal year 2013 includes \$101.5 million for homeless services, which administration officials presented as a nearly \$2 million increase over the current fiscal year.

But the loss of federal funding, coupled with the increasing cost of sheltering rising numbers of homeless families, have continued to raise questions about spending for the coming year.

Between November 2011 and April 2012, 866 families applied to the city for shelter, a 15 percent increase over the previous winter season. And al-

though the city's shelter for families, located at the former DC General Hospital, was expanded, officials, overwhelmed by the needs, were forced to spend an additional \$3 million housing families in motels.

"You said, Mr. Berns, you were surprised this year," Graham said. "What happens if you are surprised again next year?"

"We will be doing things differently next year," replied Berns. "We cannot continue to spend \$3 million on hotels when there is a cheaper and more humane way to get people into apartments."

The markup of the human services budget is scheduled for May 2.

# N Street Village takes the Kennedy Center

By Christina Mele  
*Editorial Intern*

"I feel famous!"  
"I don't want to do it."  
"I feel like acting!"  
"This is where my story begins!"

The women of N Street Village reacted with elation and nervousness when they first glimpsed the Terrace Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The reality of the challenge ahead was hitting them. Together they were preparing for an April 30 production of "My Soul Look Back and Wonder: Life Stories from Women in Recovery."

The one-night-only show would be woven out of poetry and gospel songs, and the women's own painful and courageous stories: their journeys out of homelessness, addiction, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Such stories are never easy to tell. But the act of telling them can be empowering, said Deb Gottesman, founder of the Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts. She helped direct and mount the production as part of Theatre Lab's Life Stories at N Street Village, a drama program serving homeless women in substance abuse recovery.

"One of the things that we believe in Life Stories is that your life story isn't just something that happens to you," said Gottesman. "It's what you make of it."

And that is how fifteen women from N Street Village became part of the production, serving as actors, playing themselves in their own stories or playing other people in each other's stories.

"These are stories of women as mothers, daughters, wives and girlfriends, churchgoers," said Ann McCready, director of programs at N Street Village. "They reflect on their spirituality. Some reflect on their HIV status. It is centered on the roles they have played, and it is their perspective looking back on things," she added.

There are many such stories at N Street Village, founded in 1972 by members of Luther Place Memorial Church who saw a need to provide services for the growing homeless population in Washington, D.C. When N Street began, it offered simple sleeping mats on the floor of the church. But the program has since grown and evolved, providing



**The women of N Street Village take a tour of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where they will perform April 30.**

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA MELE

emergency and long-term services to thousands of poor and homeless women out of a 150,000-square-foot facility at 14th and N Streets, NW in the Logan Circle neighborhood of D.C.

Women find their way to N Street for a "variety of reasons," McCready said. But "most are in recovery programs for substance abuse, mental illness, or chronic physical illness."

"Individuals experiencing homelessness have life experiences that folks can't imagine," added McCready. "They have choices to make that are very difficult."

So a recurring theme at N Street Village is survival, and the narratives of the women who stay there found a perfect fit with the Theatre Lab goal, teaching "people from marginalized populations to create original dramatic works from real life experiences," Gottesman said. The Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts includes about 13,000 students, ranging in age from 6 to 99. The school is for people who want to learn about acting, and students learn about acting and storytelling. This year marks its twentieth anniversary.

"I don't think you need to be a professional to give a really strong performance as long as you understand the craft," said Gottesman. "That part is really exciting and fun. A lot of these women have never seen a show on stage before."

Work on the production began Feb. 9, with Gottesman and Theatre Lab

instructor Thomas Workman serving as co-directors. Award-winning playwright Jennifer Nelson took the women's words and "structured the words into stories" to create a script, Gottesman said.

"Surprisingly, it's full of tremendous humor," she added. "That comes from the women. Some of them are amazing storytellers. It's an incredibly inspiring and moving production."

Denise Nelson, one of the performers from N Street Village, plays the mother of a pregnant 13-year-old girl, whom she is taking to the doctor for an abortion. Nelson said it is a true story about a cast member.

"I was excited to be able to do it," she said. "It's a healing process. N Street Village has given me love and hope."

Nelson, who is 17 years clean, said she feels blessed to be here. She said she believes that God offered her this opportunity in order to help someone else.

"I wanted to be able to reach someone, to let them know there's a chance," she said. "It's a wonderful journey. There are so many people out there hiding all these feelings. I want them to know they don't have to hide it. Through God they can overcome it."

But participation has been challenging as well, she said. The hardest part of the experience "has been remembering the pain and sharing the pain."

Another performer, Pertrina Thomas, said she found the chance to play a character in someone else's story at

the Kennedy Center was exciting and overwhelming.

"It has built up my esteem," she said. "I was like 'oh my God!' What more can you ask for?"

Thomas said she was the last one to join the performance, and she is "really happy to be able to do this."

"It's just a lot of experiences that people have shared," she said. "I had a lot of years in great darkness. This is going to bring the light out in me. Many years of darkness and my light is going to shine."

Gottesman predicted the production would have a different impact on different people.

"For the women [in the show], it's an opportunity to take the darkest points in their lives and inspire and educate people," she said. "For us, it's a culmination of everything we believe. It can help empower people, and teach us that there's more to who we are than we think."

McCready said she believed the play would endow the women's experiences with dignity.

"There's such a sense of grandeur and importance around it," McCready said. "To them it means, 'my experiences are important enough to other people that someone is renting a space at the Kennedy Center to hear my story'."

Many family members of the women in the show have been invited to be part of the audience, said Gottesman. She said she hoped the show would give them a new way of looking at their loved ones.

As for McCready, she said she hopes that audience members will leave feeling new respect for homeless women and their struggles to transcend.

"This performance will open your mind to the strength and courage of women who experience homelessness," McCready said. "You will be changed and you will see the world through a new lens."

*Tickets must be purchased in advance for the Monday, April 30 performance at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. Show time is 7:30 p.m. The performance will be followed by a panel discussion featuring R. Gil Kerlikowske, director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy.*

# Giving Poverty a Voice Through Voting

By Abbey Woodfin  
Editorial Intern

## "Voting is the building block of power"

Stepping briskly, Elinor Hart, a volunteer for the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, moved around the meeting of the Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations (COHHO), gathering up the paperwork offered to her by homeless advocates and outreach workers.

Then Hart headed to the city Board of Elections and Ethics with the papers she had collected: more than 100 voter registration forms, completed by poor and homeless D.C. residents.

Homeless people are entitled to vote. But they may face barriers to making their voices heard. Since they live transient lives, their names may be purged from registration rolls. They may lack identification documents. Then there is the fact that they have no home address.

In the 1984 case known as *Pitts v. Black*, a federal court in New York explicitly found that homeless persons could not be denied the right to vote just because they did not live in a traditional residence. Subsequent cases

from around the country have come to similar conclusions, the National Coalition for the Homeless points out in a manual for homeless voter registration.

But when a person does not even have a place to sleep at night, political involvement may be eclipsed by other concerns.

Nechama Masliansky, a senior advocacy advisor at the nonprofit So Others Might Eat (SOME) and co-convenor for COHHO, understands the challenges. But she sees it as important for the poor and homeless to vote.

"Voting is the building block of power," she said.

To build strength and show the poor and homeless clients at SOME and elsewhere in the city that their votes matter, she decided to work for wider voter registration.

"If we can come to the City Council and say that we have registered 1,000 people to vote in a city of 600,000 people, half of whom are children, it should have an impact," she said.

With a little urging from Masliansky, SOME and other nonprofits got to work registering their clients. At SOME, 165 voter registration forms were filled out. At another program, Miriam's Kitchen, 50 forms were completed. The People for Fairness Coalition, an organization of homeless people, registered 80 voters at Adams Place shelter alone.

Sometimes potential homeless voters were confused about how to fill out the forms or what address to use, said Masliansky.

Help was there for them, through the voter registration efforts.

"We didn't take the pen, we didn't do it for them," said Masliansky. "But what goes in line one, what goes in line two, why are there two addresses in two lines on the forms? We tried to address these questions in person," said Masliansky.

Some of the homeless people who were registering listed the addresses of the programs they attended, such as Miriam's Kitchen and Adam's Place Shelter, which is allowed under the law.

Then Hart, from the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization seeking to educate citizens and encourage them to be informed and active participants in governmental issues, came to the COHHO meeting, collected the latest batch of forms and delivered them directly to the board of elections and ethics to be sure they did not get lost or mislaid.

The way Amanda Formica, a case manager at Miriam's Kitchen, sees it, voting can be an antidote to disenfranchisement that sometimes goes with homelessness.

"Civic participation is a way to get outside of yourself," she said. "Advocacy and voting can be a way to have people

get involved with something bigger than themselves."

Robert M. Day, who stays at Adams Place shelter, used that address for his registration form. He proudly showed off his new voter registration card.

"Filling out a form gives you a card, which gives you the vote, which gives you a voice in the city," he said.

Miriam's Kitchen helped people register, and explained why voting is so important and how their vote was a piece of empowerment for their voice to be heard, said Michael Fischer Jr., directory of advocacy.

Sylvia Randolph, 38, is a frequent visitor at Miriam's Kitchen. She said she voted for the first time in the 2008 presidential election. Before President Obama, she thought voting didn't matter.

"I felt like with Obama, my voice and opinion were heard," she said.

Like Sylvia, Street Sense vendor L. Morrow, has been registered to vote for decades. He believes voting makes a difference. He said that by not voting you cannot make a difference, but the difference is made when you do vote.

Morrow remembers helping his grandfather vote for the first time. His grandfather couldn't read or write. He helped him fill out the papers, so his grandfather could vote for the first time. "That's why I cherish voting, because of my grandpa."

# Franklin School Shelter Remains Empty After Controversial Closing

By Abbey Woodfin  
Editorial Intern

Eric Sheptock was passionate and spirited as he told of the events that unfolded surrounding the closing of the Franklin School Shelter in 2008. Sheptock, a homeless advocate, stood among the protesters when the city planned to shut down the Franklin School Shelter in 2006 and again in 2008. Sheptock's voice was booming as he talked about what happened to the former school-turned-shelter.

He lived at the Franklin School Shelters before it was finally closed in the fall of 2008 by former D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty. The men who were living at the school were then relocated to other

shelters or permanent housing.

In the weeks leading up to the closing, the 300 beds were dismantled a few at a time. Sheptock said that on the night of Sept. 26, he and the rest of the 50 men who remained at the shelter were awakened and their beds were then dismantled. Then the windows were shuttered; the doors were locked; the Franklin School Shelter had been shut down.

"Fenty shut down the Franklin Shelter, the only downtown homeless refuge. He also had to back away from his ambitious Housing First program — which promised to put the homeless in permanent housing — because of a budget crunch," Sheptock said in an interview with the DC Examiner.

The school, located on the corner of 13 and K streets NW, is where Alexander Graham Bell sent his first wireless call in 1880 using the photophone, but like many old buildings, there were many safety concerns. The roof was caving in, and officials said that the school was unfit to live in and needed to be shut down.

Due to historic preservation requirements and needed repairs, the redevelopment of the property is expected to cost between \$20 million and \$30 million. Franklin School is located at the heart of the city's business district and is considered prime real estate. But it is also public property and some suggest it should be used for a community purpose, such as a shelter or a library. Last November, an Occupy McPherson

subgroup broke into the school and attempted to occupy it to bring attention to the issue. Police arrested the D.C. Occupiers as they were trying to take over the school.

One developer's plan to refurbish the building as a boutique hotel fell through several years ago. But bidding was recently reopened to developers. Jose Sousa a spokesman for the city Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development, said that there are currently no plans to turn the school back into a shelter. He told that since bidding was reopened, no offers have been made.

# Anti-Homeless Laws: Finally, Some Good News

**A new report, released by two federal agencies, offers alternatives to criminalizing homelessness. The findings could change the way cities treat their homeless—or not.**

By Anna Salinas  
*Editorial Intern*

Occupy DC protesters may be familiar with a District law that criminalizes sleeping in public spaces. It is, after all, one of the main reasons the once tent-laden McPherson Square was raided in February when police stormed the park, seizing sleeping bags and pillows.

But for DC's homeless population, the no-sleeping law is a nightly reminder of the challenge of living on the street—a challenge often made more difficult by municipal governments attempting to "beautify" or tighten the security in certain areas.

The ban is just one of several more "acts of living" laws, which frequently also prohibit panhandling and in some

cities even include bans on eating and sitting in public spaces. Unsurprisingly, the laws almost exclusively target the homeless.

But on April 9, two federal agencies released a report detailing alternatives to criminalizing homelessness. The report, co-authored by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the U.S. Department of Justice, proposes creating systems of assistance that integrate housing and services, with particular emphasis on the provision of behavioral health resources. It also encourages city governments to work with local businesses, schools and nonprofit organizations in developing and sustaining programs for the homeless.

This is the first report on criminal-

ization to be released by the federal government.

The 53-page text is divided into three "solutions," the first of which encourages communities to develop comprehensive "systems of care." Exploring a series of case studies, the authors briefly mention the District's own DC Central Kitchen, named as a model of "communitywide coordination" in food sharing.

Urging collaboration between service providers and law enforcement, the report also praises DC's Downtown Homeless Management Team, which is funded by downtown property owners and manned by Pathways DC.

The final solution, and perhaps the most progressive, offers alternative justice system strategies meant to reduce the link between homelessness and

problems associated with incarceration. The report specifically notes the ways in which mental illness and substance abuse can leave one-time offenders vulnerable to homelessness and re-incarceration. In response to this issue, the report recommends the provision of so-called "problem-solving courts" which offer treatment and supervision instead of jail time.

"Individuals with links to the mental health system had considerably higher proportions of shelter stays and re-incarcerations," reads the report.

Still, the government has yet to take any specific action in support of the recommendations, though the President's budget for the 2013 fiscal year does protect funding for existing programs serving the homeless.

## SOME Opens Gasner House to Bring Homes to 49 Men and Women

By Brandon Cooper  
*Editorial Intern*

"Safe and supportive, dignified affordable housing."

That's what the newly renovated Gasner House provides according to Troy Swanda, So Others Might Eat (SOME)'s director of housing development.

Located on the 2800 block of Texas Avenue SE, the house is now home to 49 extremely poor single adults. It is one of eight houses that are part of the organization's Affordable Housing Capital Campaign.

More than 80 people came to a dedication and opening ceremony in early April that included a speech from Mayor Vincent Gray, a ribbon cutting and a tour of the renovated building.

SOME bought the building in 2007 and, after the recession caused a delay in financing, began renovating it last year. The building now has 49 single efficiency rooms, as well as a community room and laundry facilities. Residents will be able to participate in recreational activities as well as SOME's on-site case management services.

The Affordable Housing Capital Campaign, launched in 2005, aims to place 1,000 new housing units in the District. At the time of the dedication, Father John Adams announced that SOME had so far opened 545 units. Although SOME has not met the campaign's goal yet, the organization's already helped many people find their footing and restore their lives. The organization is scheduled to open another building, the Griffin House, on June 6.

"They fed me, they clothed me," said Tony Williams, a new tenant of the Gasner House who spoke at the ceremony about how SOME has impacted his life.

"They offered me help, taught me about being spiritual. It's not about going to church. It's about a relationship with God."

The building is named after Allen Gasner, a former board member of SOME who passed away in 2002.

"Gasner House will not only serve as a symbol of Allen's legacy, but also the continued generosity of Beverly (Gasner's wife) and her family, which is going to restore hope and dignity that come to us in need and those who will



**The outside of the Gasner House, So Others Might Eat's newest housing units. SOME dedicated the building on April 11 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tour.**

PHOTO BY BRANDON COOPER

be housed in this building," Adams said.

Before the ribbon cutting ceremony and tour, Mayor Vincent Gray spoke on the need for affordable housing in the city and the role housing plays in rehabilitating a life.

"Frankly there is no more destabiliz-

ing feeling in the life of a person than to have no stable place to live," Gray said. "If you can get people a stable place to live you can work with the other issues. Until people have a place to live, it is almost impossible to solve the other problems."

# A SPECIAL RANDOM TUESDAY

By Chris Shaw  
The "Cowboy Poet"

Eyes right, eyes aloft  
Not a single moment to be lost.  
Agitators laid down their agit props,  
Bumming bums pulled out all stops.  
Corporate execs wiped their gold-rim'd specs.  
What's THAT, you say?  
An eagle, a Pterosaur.  
A giant baby whale piggybacking once more.  
Is it possible, in our own crazed age,  
Some feat of science melded with spirit  
May still amaze?  
What Soup'man, no Donner, nor Blitzen  
is Splittin' the sky.  
We need not ask why.  
No act of war, merely a friendly  
Pass, Canceling an iceberg tragedy  
across a century of tinkling  
Glass. For five minutes on April seventeenth,  
We were again one land, bound by heaven above,  
And Love beneath!

## Any Given Thursday

By Chris Shaw, "The Cowboy Poet"  
*Vendor*

This coming Thursday thousands want rockin' red  
To me that red is dead, I care not.  
Last Thursday, the ides of the Ides of April  
(The Fifth- Opening Day Nats Park to the  
Uninitiate);  
-Now That was Hot! Even my Ben's chili dog  
paled in comparison. And, Nats Red  
is a crimson that is brimmin'  
with so much promise.  
No Doubting Thomases on Op'ning Day.  
Who cared if it were DeRosey or  
Lombardozie. Bernadina the Flying Dutch  
Brought us luck, Ankiel, Werth, Zim too,  
Dished it out til Cincinnati went batty.  
You hockey fans can wait another year,  
For solid victory, 'tis the baseball NATS!  
They're Here!!

## April

By Gary J. Minter  
*Vendor*

*Inspired by T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" and Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales"*

April is the sweetest month –  
Warm rain showers the cold, dry Earth,  
Soaking, bathing Her, loosening her tightness,  
Waking her seeds and bulbs from winter's sleep...

Green sprouts thrust up toward the Aries sun,  
Drinking the sweet rain, breathing the fresh air,  
Soaking up the warm rays of light beamed to earth by old  
sol...

Growing fast, the stalks and leaves support and protect the  
blossoms of spring,  
The flowers of May, when Taurus the Bull charges across  
the cerulean sky to greet  
the Gemini Twins of June, the boys of Summer...

PHOTO BY CHRIS SHAW

## A Typical Street Sense Morning

By John Matthews  
*Vendor*

Awakening, bones aching  
from sleeping on marble  
A loving good morning kiss to her  
Throw on my shoes, roll up our blankets  
A few quick good mornings to my fellow unhoused  
Then off to Mickey D's for a cup of joe

That life-giving brew which awakens my mind  
A large cup, a refill, and maybe another  
Then race to my corner before the old lady  
Gets there to panhandle, respect must be given  
Before it can be expected  
Plop down my bags, and start to sell

A dollar here, two dollars there  
The cash flow begins to add  
I get a laugh from the suits who  
Check their wallets and smirk  
I pity their souls, and laugh at their fear  
All right! Someone gave me a five!

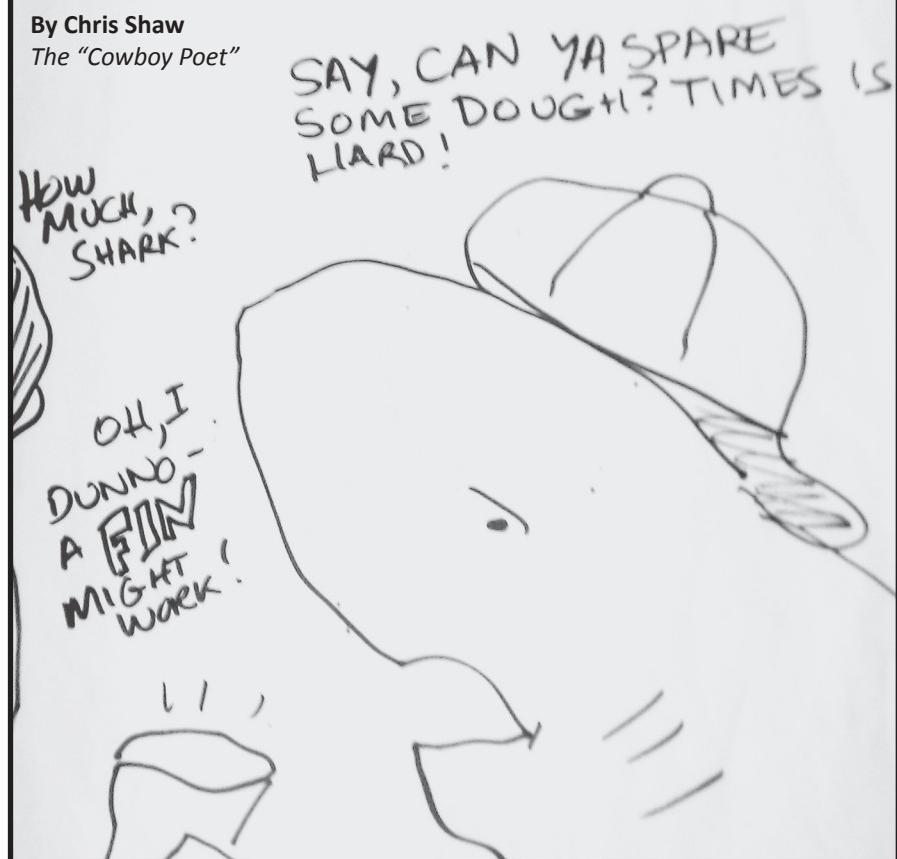
This goes on for an hour or three  
As packets grow so does hunger  
Got enough for breakfast, maybe lunch  
And a pack of smokes to last the day  
As morning slips into afternoon, the rush dies down  
Time to go to lunch.

PHOTO BY JON HOWELL

## COMICS & GAMES

### GLARPH THE POSTULATIN' SHARK #1: ON THE SKIDS

By Chris Shaw  
The "Cowboy Poet"



# Sudoku

Courtesy of Krazydad.com

8		9		5	2			
			6	9	7			
7	2	4						
9				4				
	6	1						
4					8			
	1	3	2					
1	8	4						
3	2	5						

© 2012 KrazyDad.com

SOLUTION:								
4	3	2	8	5	9	1	6	7
7	1	8	4	6	2	3	5	9
5	6	9	1	7	3	2	4	8
1	7	4	9	3	5	6	8	2
8	2	5	6	4	1	7	9	3
3	9	6	7	2	8	4	1	5
9	5	7	2	1	4	8	3	6
2	4	3	5	8	6	9	7	1
6	8	1	3	9	7	5	2	4

WASHINGTON, DC

OD ★★ 911

HELP PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS IN DC

### HAVE YOU EVER BEEN AFRAID TO CALL 911?

100 people die needlessly every year in DC from accidental drug overdoses. Friends and family are often afraid to call 911 for life-saving assistance because they fear police involvement.

We are working to save lives by passing DC Council Bill B19-0754, the Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Amendment Act of 2012. This law would protect people from arrest for drug-related offenses when seeking medical assistance for someone who has overdosed.

Please share your overdose story with us to help build support for this urgently needed law that will help save lives in our community.

Call 320-634-6324 to leave a voicemail or email [StopODinDC@gmail.com](mailto:StopODinDC@gmail.com)



We are the Drug Policy Alliance.

Supported by the Public Service Grant Commission, a program of The George Washington University's Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service.

### KLEVER'S COMICS #10: MELLO IS HERE

By Chino Dean  
Vendor

**Episode #6 series 10:** This story begins with the introduction of MELLO . He graduated high school in New Jersey two towns over from Klever! He ran also ran Track in Middle School. He timed almost as good as Klever but not fast enough for the Gold: yet he beat the Olympic times for the last 20 Years, to receive the Silver medal. He took college prep and graduated high school after 4 years with a 93 average. Upon graduation all of them wanted to go to college, but found out in both schools, the guidance counselor

that just got hired called the colleges to make sure they couldn't attend. At that point Klever reassured Mello and told him not to worry. "We still have Track and no one in the History of track beat our scores. I am going to write a copyright and prove all of it anyway." It was a good thing Klever called the F.B.I. before it filed, so now one would accuse him or Mello of hitting the towers and pentagon. *Stay tuned for the next episode to hear more about LINDEN and Carteret.....*



# Hip-Hop Must Return to Its Roots Part II

Dele Rejah  
Vendor

We must perform a kind of artistic autopsy—a scary prospect, no doubt, to those offended by the idea of hip-hop's mortality. Logic dictates that hip-hop was figuratively drugged, raped, and murdered, having worked as a hapless prostitute in one's speaker set.

I harbor no illusions that the reader is ignorant of my bias towards the conservationist's view. However, would it be polemical to ask whether Gucci Mane meets the criteria of a dope emcee for the period when hip-hop was alive? Do any of Nelly or Soulja Boy's records reflect the lyrical standards, gravity, craft, or veneration set by Rakim, Kool G. Rap, Nas, and the army of adroit rappers? Must we expect only excellence in the artistic culture of which I am a part? Is it wrong to label poor artistic work as such, even if financial success attributes a pseudo-splendor to what is essentially cleverly marketed rubbish that soils hip-hop?

The impostors that produce this kind of highly marketable rap do so freely only because the sentinels of hip-hop are not at their post. Absent are the integrity, independence, and unique

artistic Darwinism that weeded out undesirables in the Ascetic Age. Hip-hop used to reflect the lives of real people. It was a "kinship of the dispossessed," as W.E.B. Du Bois once wrote of Black America. Nowadays the hip-hop fan is alienated from good art, and barraged with flashy aesthetics to deceiving him into consummating with D-grade rap.

Somehow the monastic, hard, dark, and organic tone that once reflected across the 1990s was lost along with hip-hop's variegated artistic styles. Currently, synthetic hip-hop reigns king. These artists would inevitably be subject to insults if they were to perform a cappella on a street corner in America's 'hoods with no corporate money to back them up. Gone is the era of hardcore beats and grassroots-driven feedback acting as lyrical law.

To be sure, I realize that the corporate globalization of hip-hop is just a sliver of a movement that would put a Starbucks in Lima, Peru. And certainly, hip-hop's unprecedented level of prosperity from the pop music dollar-tree gave many of African-Americans the means to become power players in the music industry.

By 2004, the so-called "Bling Era"

of hip-hop had arrived. House parties, "forties," and blunts were ousted; in their stead stood champagne, nightclubs and expensive cigars. Hip-hop had grown up to engage a widespread global fan-base. In America, however, the music became predictable. Hip-hop lost its edge. It was Fonzie without his cool.

It's no fun to be a citizen of a faded empire. Peter Pan may be rich when he grows up, but he certainly won't be fresh and adventurous. I am reminded of an old hip-hop axiom: "Rap was secondary; money was necessary." This has been true for the entire history of hip-hop, but these days that gap is growing. Hip-hop has gone the way of the iconic Bob Marley image. As with posters and postcards of Marley, rap was stripped to the very substance of its soul, then defanged of its grit.

It's as if record executives have said: "Let's make as many people as we can love hip-hop by controlling her in our prostitution racket. We will fool the artists into submission by shelving work that does not fit the criteria of the principle by which we work. We want anyone with some money to be a part of hip-hop... at all costs."

So many new emcees today are sim-

ply beggars with microphones, panhandling in rhyme to abate their hunger pangs. It's evidenced in their every rhyme. The pure and chaste hip-hop was richer in artistic virtue than she could ever be as a harlot. A sea of worthless emcees and producers make it clear that hip-hop is nothing more than a barking dog with no teeth.

The Golden Era-loving hip-hop head finds himself in the agony and despair of starvation. I accept the reality as it is, but I invite the reader to consider what has changed in hip-hop. Are the artists trying to be inventive, intricate, or even creative despite the commercial risks? Or are they simply hustling fans in corroboration with corporate interests? Is the art an end in itself? Or is it a means to financial success? To be fair, in the artist's shoes, I would likely make the same Faustian deal. But I am not the artist and I expect more.

So, let the champagne pop. I wonder if a day will come when people find that hip-hop, unadulterated and pure, is a grassroots, revolutionary art form created by diaspora Africans from the streets, among "wonderful facts you might not know." It happened with rock n' roll, didn't it?

## You've Got Scam

By Jeffery McNeil  
Vendor

I'm approaching middle age. Most of my relatives are senior citizens, ready for retirement.

But a few bad decisions could ruin everything for them.

Because of the age and deterioration of their mental and physical capacity due to age, seniors become prime targets for con artists. Many scams go under the radar and never get publicity; many go unreported due to embarrassment. According to the Investor Protection Trust's Elder Investor Fraud Survey, one out of every five citizens over the age of 65 has been a victim of financial fraud.

According to the Pew Research Center, seniors are better off than younger people. In 2009 the typical household headed by the older adult had \$170,494 in net worth, compared with just \$3,662 for the typical household headed by

the younger adult. Folks usually accumulate wealth as they age, so it makes sense that there would be large gaps in wealth based on age.

But this concentration of wealth paints a large target on seniors.

Many elders fall prey to clever marketing tactics used by TV personalities who advertise to invest in gold, art dealing and too-good-to-be-true scams. While these con artists use mass media, seniors are also sometimes betrayed by those they know best, people who portray themselves as friends or helpful relatives.

They persuade seniors by asking for a credit card number or bank statement. The more ambitious types persuade seniors into signing over power of attorney.

The aging process makes people more susceptible to fraud. Studies have shown that mental capabilities peak at 53. According to the Alzheimer's Foundation, over 5 million Americans have some form of the disease.

Education and awareness can help protect against fraud. If something is too good to be true, chances are it

isn't. Before making an important financial choice, do your own research. Talk with a trusted financial advisor, and do some reading.

Before you sign something, read it. If it is confusing and complicated, chances are whoever wrote it doesn't want you to understand. A simple test is to ask if you can come back after you have someone review it. If whoever is trying to sell you on the deal pressures you, head for the door. If it is a good investment today it will be good tomorrow.

If you have older loved ones, it's good to look out for them. If a typically outgoing relative has become isolated or withdrawn, it could be out of pride or fear that he or she is in trouble. Use your instincts to probe your elderly relative about what is wrong.

If your relative decides to give you financial power of attorney, review his or her financial statements on a regular basis, and look for any suspicious activity on their accounts. Unusual signatures and flurries of unexpected financial transactions could be red flags.

Your elder may want to donate money or use his or her savings to invest. But do some research to see if the charity or investment opportunity is reputable. Get the information in writing, review the fine print and see if it is legitimate. You should always ask for written information from the organization or charity. Reputable businesses or organizations know that it is proper protocol to ask for written information. If you are unfamiliar with companies, you can contact your local consumer protection Agency, better business bureau, or state attorney general's office.

My last piece of advice is know your legal rights. Before you invest or make a transaction, you should educate yourself about consumer rights.

For victims, the chance of recovering stolen money can be slim. It is plausible that there will be no arrest for the perpetrator. So be wary and be vigilant on behalf of yourself and the seniors in your life. There are con artists out there, planning their next scam.



# Nina the Detective

*& The Revealing Photos, part 1*

By Ivory Wilson  
*Vendor*

**C**hicago's biggest Irish gangster, Fitz O'Patrick, is going to trial on weapons and murder charges in four weeks. He has been out on bond since his arrest. Nina, the detective who arrested him, was warned by Captain Newton to stay away from O'Patrick.

It's Sunday night. From a dark, smoke-filled room upstairs from Lee's Pool Hall a call is made to the home of the mayor of Chicago. Mayor Richard answers the phone. A strong voice says, "You need to remember, Mayor, that elections are coming up soon and the usual donations will be made to your campaign."

Mayor Richard replies, "Now, look. O'Patrick has to do a little time. No more than five years, but time, just the same."

The voice angrily responds, "No time."

"Look," says the mayor, "it won't look good if I call the DA's office in the middle of the night and tell him to drop all the charges against O'Patrick."

The voice laughs. "Let's say these photos I'm looking at, pictures of you and this beautiful underage little girl in a hotel room, just happen to show up in the hands of the press..."

Mayor Richard knows he is beaten. "Okay. Okay. But this is the last time," he tells the voice. All the voice does is laugh and hang up.

Mayor Richard rubs his head and

wracks his brain over why he'd been so stupid and had taken that girl to his room. The thought of taking his pistol from his desk drawer and ending the misery crosses his mind. He knows that if those photographs get out he'll be finished as mayor and his family will be ruined. He picks up the phone and calls the DA at home. When DA Winston answers the mayor gets right to the point. "Mr. Winston, I need to know what charges your office has on Fitz O'Patrick."

"Well," the DA replies, "right now we only have him on a weapons charge, but we're close to making a sweet deal with one of his crew who is going to rat him out on murder."

**The DA pauses. "This whole matter is now over my head," he replies.**

"Here's what I think," says the mayor. "You need to drop these discussions of a deal and drop all the charges against O'Patrick." DA Winston starts to object but the mayor abruptly hangs up. Stunned over what he has just heard, the DA realizes he's just been ordered to let a murdering gangster walk.

On Monday morning, a young lawyer wearing a suit that cannot have cost less than \$5,000 walks into the DA's office with a weapons permit for O'Patrick. "As you know," the lawyer informs the

DA, "Mr. O'Patrick is a business owner who is allowed to carry a gun and this is a legal permit that allows my client to carry a weapon at all times."

As soon as the lawyer leaves his office, the DA picks up his phone and calls Captain Newton. "Winston here," he says, when he is connected to the captain. "I got some news for you."

Newton laughs and says, "I hope I'm going to be happy after this call."

The DA suggests that Newton sit down and tells him, "O'Patrick won't be going to trial on weapons charges or murder charges or anything else."

"What!?" Newton yells into the phone, jumping out of his chair, "you can't be serious!"

The DA pauses. "This whole matter is now over my head," he replies.

"Are you telling me the mayor told you to drop the charges?"

"I didn't say that."

"Come on, Winston. You know as well as I do that the mayor is up to his neck with these gangsters. He hangs out in the same places they do and they've got his number."

"I know, but I've got to let O'Patrick go. Sorry I haven't made your day."

When they hang up, Newton's first thought is: how is he going to tell this to Nina?

Nina has the day off and is hanging out at her grandparents' place, listening to Steely Dan CDs and practicing her judo moves. Her phone rings and

when she answers, a woman's voice says, "Hey, Nina. It's Pir Brown." Brown is a kick-ass detective in Detroit who is known for tossing bad guys through plate glass windows and off of rooftops

**"You know as well as I do that the mayor is up to his neck with these gangsters."**

to get confessions. She and Nina were in the same police training class in Chicago and became good friends.

Nina says, "Yo, girl. You still putting bad guys in the hospital?"

"Of course," replies Pir. "I wanted to call and congratulate you on taking down O'Patrick and his gang. You're a hit in all the newspapers here in Detroit. By the way, how are your grandparents, Steve and Ann? Is Ann still baking those amazing chocolate chip cookies and leaving some out for you with a glass of milk when you're out late?"

Nina smiles and says, "Girl, you know she's still doing that."

"Well, I've got to find time to come and visit. I'll join you in devouring some cookies."

"Anytime, girl, and thanks for the call," says Nina, and she returns to her judo and Steely Dan.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANNA SALINAS

## VENDOR WRITING

# Self Reflection

By David Denny

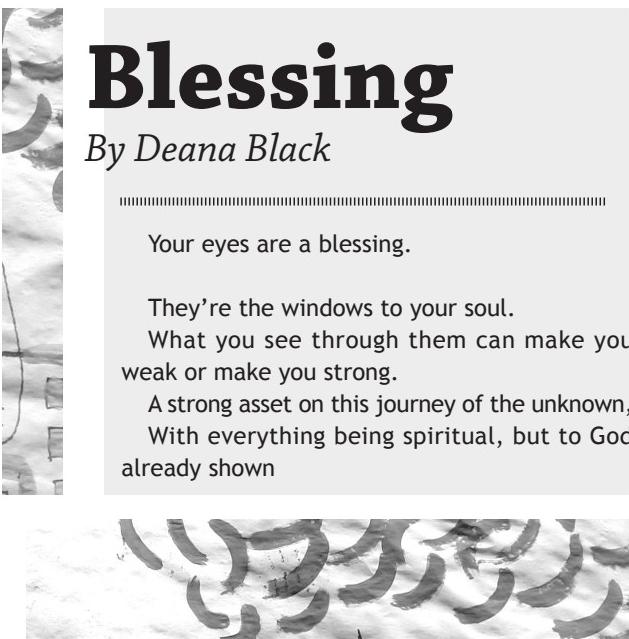
We meet here often at this same old place  
And the tears you cry wet my face  
The pain I feel you'll never grasp  
You're just a reflection an image on glass  
You claim to reveal every fact  
But image without substance is not exact  
You are limited to what you can see  
Stuck in a mirror and can never be free  
So don't you even try to hide  
All your faults and failures inside  
For all the things you hide I feel  
The things a reflection can never reveal.

# Blessing

By Deana Black

Your eyes are a blessing.

They're the windows to your soul.  
What you see through them can make you  
weak or make you strong.  
A strong asset on this journey of the unknown,  
With everything being spiritual, but to God  
already shown



# People Stop

By Corey Roberts

People fussing and fighting.  
Now it has gotten worse.  
They went from fussing and fighting to  
people stabbing and shooting and  
blowing up buildings.

Why? Why?

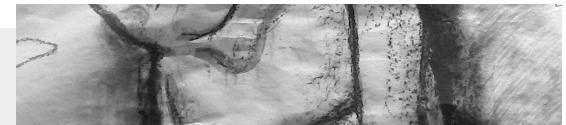
Why are we so angry, do you  
see what you're doing you're killing families,  
your own families.

One person with a child said we have no money, food and jobs.  
This is wrong but you're killing your babies.  
But we're still killing each other.  
When does this stop?  
It is up to you to break this cycle.



# God's Love

By Evelyn Namn



Love is the solution to virtually every problem. Many of our human disturbances show evidence of a lack of love. When love is brought to bear upon a problem we soon discover the solution. If we find ourselves fearful or hostile toward another person or situation we turn to the supreme love of God that knows no defeat. If we feel sick or tired, frustrated or concerned, try to let love fill your mind, body, and soul. With Love there can be no place for disease to linger. The swift flowing current of God's healing love purifies our body, mind, and affairs. Trouble cannot prevail against the power of divine love. When solving a problem seems too difficult, challenging, and just impossible, try God's love; you'll be happy you did. 1 Corinthians 16:14 says let all that you do be done in love.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Would you like to  
continue support  
of Street Sense  
throughout the  
year?

Order a subscription today!

Spring got  
your dog  
bouncing  
off the  
walls?

Call  
**BARK  
BUSTERS**

- ANY DOG      - IN-HOME TRAINING  
- ANY PROBLEM      - GUARANTEED SUPPORT

[www.BarkBusters.com](http://www.BarkBusters.com) 877-500-BARK

# Self-Defense: An Empowering Gift

*A karate instructor teaches Women of Street Sense skills to protect themselves and defuse dangerous situations.*

By Nicki Conyers  
Women of Street Sense  
Special Events Coordinator

Recently, Street Sense joined forces again with Senior Karate Instructor Sarah Wolf of D.C. Self Defense Karate Association for a Women of Street Sense (WSS) Self-Defense Workshop. The latest event followed up on a self-defense Workshop back in September. Wolf has helped educate and empower the women against possible harmful and life-threatening situations.

The recent workshop was a continuation of verbal strategies with the addition of low-force physical techniques to evade confrontation, sexual assault and abduction. Vendors Gwynette Smith, Sybil Taylor, and Jacqueline Turner showed off their skills in self-defense exercises. They reviewed verbal techniques to avoid physical conflict. When words failed, Smith, Taylor, and Turner put on their fighting shoes to reinforce that the words "no thank you" mean "NO" and nothing more.

In some situations aggressors don't seem to respect verbal or body language indicators that you disapprove of their harassment and just want them to back off. So, when words can't reach an aggressor, one must make the choice to exercise low-force self-defense skills in order to flee possible harmful situation, get to safety and reach out for help.

With the help of Wolf, WSS effectively got this message across to participants of the workshop.

Wolf's greatest advice for women is to avoid physical confrontations by verbal and mental tactics, because by doing so an individual can gain control of



Karate instructor Sarah Wolf discusses ways to verbally avoid physical conflicts and how to fight back when other options fail.



PHOTOS BY NICKI CONYERS

a hostile situation. Her whole strategy is to defuse a potentially aggressive situation before it escalates. Participants of the workshop were encouraged to become more aware of their environment, avoid compromising conditions, and exercise body language and voice tones for de-escalation.

Wolf pointed out when verbal and mental strategies fail, low-force physical methods can be used to avoid dangerous

circumstances. Most importantly, Wolf showed the women the safest and most practical way to hit and fight back in the event of an attack. Women are still advised to use low-force measures in order to escape dangerous situations instead by combating the assailant. Wolf's final piece of advice was, "In life-threatening situations, an individuals' greatest line of defense is following their instincts."



## About the Teacher

Sarah Wolf has been teaching karate and self-defense since 1993 under Sensei Carol Middleton. She started her training after taking a self-defense class after moving to Washington, D.C., from college. She says, "I took the self-defense class because I thought it would be important to learn having just moved to the city. I continued my training because I was very inspired by the karate students I met." She now is a full-time instructor at the D.C. Self Defense Karate Association. She said, "It had not occurred to me that I do have the skills and the power to keep myself safe. With my martial arts training I feel more calm, centered and strong. What I love about teaching martial arts and self-defense is that it is all about empowering people by giving them more knowledge and skills. When we have information we can make better choices for ourselves."

## Service Spotlight: Safe Shores

**By Meagan Ramsay**  
*Editorial Intern*

Safe Shores is a nonprofit organization serving children and families affected by abuse in D.C. Children who are brought to the organization by the police department or the city child and family services agency typically have experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse or witnessed violence. Many times they have seen someone assaulted or even murdered.

Children receive services at the organization from the age they can talk up until they are 18. But developmentally-delayed adults that function on the level of a child can also receive services.

"The effects of abuse on children can be lifelong. That's why therapy is so important – because there can be long lasting feelings of shame and guilt," said Jada Irwin, senior communications associate for Safe Shores. "People act out, they abuse substances and they become promiscuous or even suicidal. Any

of those issues can affect your ability to earn a living."

What makes Safe Shores distinctive is that it coordinates a multidisciplinary team, which is responsible for responding to allegations of abuse. The team includes the Metropolitan Police Department, Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of the Attorney General, the United States Attorney's Office and Children's National Medical Center. All of the team member agencies have a suite in Safe Shore's office building, which makes it easier to assist the children and families.

All services provided through Safe Shore's three programs – victim services, forensic services and clinical services – are free of charge. The organization has helped more than 13,000 children since its founding in 1994.

"We want people to know that we are here and that we're an open resource," Irwin said. "The child abuse issue is real and that every person has a part to play in helping to fight that fight."

### DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS HOTLINE

1-888-7WE HELP (1-888-793-4357)

### SHELTER

Calvary Women's Services  
110 Maryland Avenue, NE  
(202) 289-0596 (office)  
(202) 289-2111 (shelter)  
[www.calvaryservices.org](http://www.calvaryservices.org)

Central Union Mission (Men)  
1350 R Street, NW  
(202) 745-7118, [www.missiondc.org](http://www.missiondc.org)

Open Door Shelter (Women)  
425 2nd Street, NW  
(202) 393-1909  
[www.newhopeministriesdc.org/id3.html](http://www.newhopeministriesdc.org/id3.html)

Community of Hope (Family)  
1413 Girard Street, NW  
(202) 232-7356, [www.communityofhopedc.org](http://www.communityofhopedc.org)

Covenant House Washington (Youth)  
2001 Mississippi Avenue, SE  
(202) 610-9600, [www.covenanthousedc.org](http://www.covenanthousedc.org)

John Young Center (Women)  
119 D Street, NW  
(202) 639-8469, [www.catholiccharitiesdc.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesdc.org)

My Sister's Place  
PO Box 29596, Washington, DC 20017  
(202) 529-5261 (office)  
(202) 529-5991 (24-hour hotline)

N Street Village (Women)  
1333 N Street, NW  
(202) 939-2060, [www.nstreetvillage.org](http://www.nstreetvillage.org)

Samaritan Inns  
2523 14th St., NW  
(202) 667 - 8831  
<http://www.samaritaninns.org/home/>

New York Ave Shelter (Men 18+)  
1355-57 New York Avenue, NE  
(202) 832-2359

### FOOD

Charlie's Place  
1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
(202) 232-3066  
[www.stmargaretsdc.org/charliesplace](http://www.stmargaretsdc.org/charliesplace)

Church of the Pilgrims (Sundays only)  
2201 P Street, NW  
(202) 387-6612, [www.churchofthepilgrims.org](http://www.churchofthepilgrims.org)

Thrive DC  
Breakfast served Mon.-Fri., 9:30-11 a.m.  
Dinner for women and children, Mon.-Fri.,

3-6 p.m.  
St. Stephens Parish Church  
1525 Newton St, NW  
(202) 737-9311, [www.thrivedc.org](http://www.thrivedc.org)

Food and Friends  
219 Riggs Road, NE  
(202) 269-2277, [www.foodandfriends.org](http://www.foodandfriends.org)

Miriam's Kitchen  
2401 Virginia Avenue, NW  
(202) 452-8089, [www.miriamskitchen.org](http://www.miriamskitchen.org)

The Welcome Table  
Church of the Epiphany  
1317 G Street, NW  
(202) 347-2635, <http://www.epiphanydc.org/ministry/welcometbl.htm>

### MEDICAL RESOURCES

Christ House  
1717 Columbia Road, NW  
(202) 328-1100, [www.christhouse.org](http://www.christhouse.org)

Unity Health Care, Inc.  
3020 14th Street, NW  
(202) 745-4300, [www.unityhealthcare.org](http://www.unityhealthcare.org)

Whitman-Walker Clinic  
1407 S Street, NW  
(202) 797-3500, [www.wwc.org](http://www.wwc.org)

OUTREACH CENTERS

Bread for the City  
1525 Seventh Street, NW  
(202) 265-2400

Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place  
4713 Wisconsin Avenue NW  
(202) 364-1419, [www.cchfp.org](http://www.cchfp.org)

Bethany Women's Center  
1333 N Street, NW  
(202) 939-2060, [www.nstreetvillage.org](http://www.nstreetvillage.org)

Father McKenna Center  
19 Eye Street, NW  
(202) 842-1112

Friendship House  
619 D Street, SE  
(202) 675-9050, [www.friendshiphouse.net](http://www.friendshiphouse.net)

Georgetown Ministry Center  
1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
(202) 338-8301

[www.georgetownministrycenter.org](http://www.georgetownministrycenter.org)  
Martha's Table  
2114 14th Street, NW  
(202) 328-6608, [www.marthastable.org](http://www.marthastable.org)

Rachel's Women's Center  
1222 11th Street, NW  
(202) 682-1005, [www.ccdsd.org/howorwc.php](http://www.ccdsd.org/howorwc.php)

Sasha Bruce Youthwork  
741 8th Street, SE  
(202) 675-9340, [www.sashabruce.org](http://www.sashabruce.org)

So Others Might Eat (SOME)  
71 "O" Street, NW  
(202) 797-8806; [www.some.org](http://www.some.org)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Academy of Hope GED Center  
601 Edgewood Street, NE  
(202) 269-6623, [www.aohdc.org](http://www.aohdc.org)

Catholic Community Services  
924 G Street, NW  
(202) 772-4300, [www.ccs-dc.org](http://www.ccs-dc.org)

D.C. Coalition for the Homeless  
1234 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
(202) 347-8870, [www.dccfh.org](http://www.dccfh.org)

Community Family Life Services  
305 E Street, NW  
(202) 347-0511, [www.cflsd.org](http://www.cflsd.org)

Foundry Methodist Church  
1500 16th Street, NW  
(202) 332-4010, [www.foundryumc.org](http://www.foundryumc.org)

Gospel Rescue Ministries (Men)  
810 5th Street, NW  
(202) 842-1731, [www.grm.org](http://www.grm.org)

Hermano Pedro Day Center  
3211 Sacred Heart Way, NW  
(202) 332-2874  
[www.ccs-dc.org/find/services/](http://www.ccs-dc.org/find/services/)

JHP, Inc.  
425 2nd Street, NW  
(202) 544-9126, [www.jobshavepriority.org](http://www.jobshavepriority.org)

Samaritan Ministry  
1345 U Street, SE  
1516 Hamilton Street, NW  
(202) 889-7702, [www.samaritanministry.org](http://www.samaritanministry.org)

**SHELTER HOTLINE:  
1-800-535-7252**

## VENDOR PROFILE: PIEUS ENNELS

By Meagan Ramsay  
Editorial Intern

Street Sense vendor Pieus Ennels said his life began to fall apart in 1987. That was the year his mother died. After his father died two years later, he was convinced the world had turned against him. And he turned against the world as well.

"It was a downfall from there. I began drinking and drugging," he said. "It led me to be homeless."

He spent years adrift, with nothing to distract him from his troubles and addictions. But four years ago, Ennels began selling newspapers for *Street Sense*. He said that was a turning point for him. He was able to quit abusing drugs and alcohol, he said, because he was occupied by his work.

Selling papers has not only helped Ennels in his struggle with addiction, it has changed his state of mind.

"I'm almost back in the working class," Ennels said. "I've gotten back into the working class mind, and I appreciate what *Street Sense* has done."

In spite of his optimism, health issues have prevented Ennels from a complete return to the workforce. He had surgery for cancer on his left lung four days before Christmas and has since struggled physically.

And, still without a permanent home, Ennels continues to sleep in homeless shelters. Occasionally he stays with a nephew, but he does not like burdening his family. He hopes connections with his customers in Columbia Heights or Connecticut Avenue will lead to an available room or apartment.

Generosity from customers has continued to buoy Ennel's hopeful-



ness. His best memory of selling *Street Sense* was last Christmas when he received a card and \$50 from someone on the street.

"A lot of people turn their nose up. I try to explain that homelessness could happen to anyone. That gift really picked up my spirits," he said.

Always smiling and looking on the bright side, Ennels hopes to return to good health as he approaches his 58th birthday in April, and he is slowly getting back into church after venturing away for a while.

But nothing in Ennels' future puts a smile on his face quite like the potential for romance.

"A nice middle-aged lady that needs a middle-aged man," Ennels said when asked what he is most looking forward to. "I try to be as enjoyable as I can, but I need someone to have enjoyment with."

As a four-year veteran vendor of *Street Sense*, Ennels has had his share of experiences on the street. Because of his embattled past, Ennels' favorite part of selling newspapers is that it keeps his mind busy with positive ideas, instead of the "strange thoughts" that used to haunt him.

"I'm not trying to have those strange thoughts anymore."

April 25 - May 8, 2012 • Volume 9 • Issue 12

Street Sense  
1317 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Mail To:

Nonprofit Org  
US Postage Paid  
Washington, DC  
Permit #568

Remember, only buy from badged  
vendors and do not give to those panhandling with  
one paper.

Interested in a subscription? Go to page 3 for more information.

## LAST WORDS: FAREWELL TO STREET SENSE

By Abbey Woodfin  
Editorial Intern

Dear Street Sense,

For 11 weeks, I came in three times a week. I volunteered, I researched, I wrote and I attended events. Unfortunately, my time has now come to an end.

As clichéd as it might seem, interning here has not only taught me how to become a better writer, but has also showed me how to be a better person. By getting assigned to different tasks, I was able to see the various parts that keep *Street Sense* moving.

Allen taught me how to be patient and enjoy what I was doing. Mary helped me critique my writing, allowing me to improve and refine my skills. Eric showed me how to design a front cover, something I would have never imagined myself being able to do, let alone loving.

However, one of my favorite times of the week was volunteering. There was always a lesson to learn while selling papers to the vendors. With cheerful dispositions and bright smiles, the vendors would walk through the door and



buy papers. Often though, some would sit down and talk for a while. They would let me peek into their lives, if only for a brief moment. We would discuss the weather, paper sales or even family issues. Each person that walked through the door had a story to tell and most were willing to share a piece of that story with me.

I wanted to say one final goodbye before going home for the summer and before starting school in the fall to finish my senior year. My experiences here at *Street Sense* have been life-giving, and I feel truly blessed to know such a place as this.

I just wanted to say, "Thank you."  
Love, Abbey Woodfin



## STREET SHOTS: TAKING A BREAK

Vendor Charles Woods rests in front of the Church of the Epiphany.

PHOTO BY PHILLIP BLACK, VENDOR PHOTO CLASS

